



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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After the Garbage Can: Where Does Our Waste Go?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 05.05.08
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This unit, which is geared toward fourth and fifth grade English language learners (ELLs), focuses on exposing students to the social and environmental issues of waste management. In this four-to-six week unit, I have integrated language arts, science, math and social studies to allow students multiple opportunities to be exposed to the content. Because the unit is targeted toward language learners, it is designed in a way to repeat key vocabulary and concepts through poetry, chants, stories, and projects. Students will keep track of their own waste for a week, thus increasing their awareness of how much waste one person can be responsible for. Students will have hands-on opportunities to observe and experience the effects of waste through field trips to the landfill and recycling plants, as well as through observing their own compost pits. Students will learn about cycles in nature, such as the water cycle and the cycle of decomposition, and how humans have affected these cycles through waste and pollution. My goal is that by the end of the unit, students will be impacted by the magnitude of the issues of waste management, and that they would begin to make positive personal choices to reduce their own waste and attempt to 'emulate nature' through recycling.

(Recommended for Language Arts and Science, grades 4-5.)

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